

APPENDIX A

THE BASELINE INTERVIEW

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Baseline interviewing took place between mid-November 1994 and July 1996.¹ All sample members were contacted by telephone soon after they had been randomized. Detailed tracking information in program intake forms, which were sent to MPR as part of the random assignment process, was used to help locate youths. In randomly selected areas, in-person interviews were attempted with sample members not reachable by telephone only because it would have been prohibitively expensive to conduct in-person interviews nationwide.

The (unweighted) response rate to the baseline interview for sample members in all areas was 93.1 percent. Interviews were completed with 14,327 of the 15,386 youths in the research sample, and most interviews were completed by telephone soon after random assignment. Furthermore, the difference in completion rates for the program research and control group is only 1.5 percentage points (93.8 percent for program research group members and 92.3 percent for control group members). The response rate for sample members in the areas selected for in-person interviewing--the *effective* response rate--was 95.2 percent (95.9 percent for program group members and 94.3 percent for control group members). Response rates to the baseline interview were high for all key subgroups, and the observed characteristics of interview respondents and nonrespondents are similar.

Many of the questions in the interview refer to events that occurred on or before the random assignment date (that is, near the time that the youths were determined eligible for the program). The random assignment date is the relevant 'baseline' date for the evaluation because it is the point after which program impacts will be measured. Thus, we use primarily the randomization date as the reference date in the analysis.

¹A separate methodological report describes the design and implementation of the baseline interview (see Appendix C in the National Job Corps Study: Methodological Appendixes on Sample Implementation and Baseline Interviewing).

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